

*Following Last Week's Melancon Letter, Air Force Will Deliver Boom to Belle Chasse Today*  
May 11, 2010

WASHINGTON D.C. – Following last week's request from U.S Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) to President Barack Obama, today the U.S. Air Force will deliver 150,000 feet of oil spill containment boom to Louisiana. In a letter to President Obama last week, Congressman Melancon requested military aircraft help bring protective boom to the Gulf Coast. Hundred of thousands of feet of protective boom have been deployed since the April 20th Deepwater Horizon oil rig disaster to protect Louisiana's fragile coastal marshes from the oil slick.

**"Our Louisiana fishermen and parish officials have been working tirelessly to lay boom and protect our coast from oil," said Rep. Melancon. "But in conversations with them last week, I learned that they were facing a severe shortage in boom material, hindering their ability to protect our coast. We need to make use of every resource available to protect our fragile marshes from further damage, and I am pleased the President has heeded my request and is using military aircraft to transport more protective boom to Louisiana."**

Today, U.S. Air Force C-17 crewmembers from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, Alaska, are scheduled to deliver oil spill containment boom to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, Louisiana. This is the first of ten shipments scheduled over the coming days delivering a total of 150,000 feet of boom.

Congressman Melancon has been leading efforts in Louisiana to coordinate the federal and local response to the oil leak caused by the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform three weeks ago. Congressman Melancon represents in the U.S. Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes.

The text of Congressman Melancon's letter to the President is copied below. A signed final copy can be viewed [online here](#).

May 7, 2010

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As I am sure you are aware, the state of Louisiana and numerous local communities on the Louisiana coast are engaged in ongoing operations to safeguard coastal marshes from the oil leak that began with the Deepwater Horizon disaster two weeks ago.

While the most important priority in minimizing the impact of this massive oil leak is to stop the continuing flow of oil from the Deepwater Horizon well, we must also ensure that the government is doing all it can to support the ongoing efforts of local fishermen and authorities laying protective boom along the coast. The boom-laying operation represents the last line of defense between the sensitive shoreline and the oil slick.

Local fishermen have been contracted by BP to lay lengths of boom to guard the most sensitive areas of the Louisiana coast. The fishermen working to deploy the boom are doing a tremendous job—they know the Louisiana coast better than anyone—but we're running into roadblocks. There simply isn't enough protective boom in Louisiana currently available to match the speed with which it is being deployed.

Reports indicate that shortages of boom have been widespread in the Gulf region, and that local officials are now looking internationally to find enough boom. Manufacturers are swamped with orders, and can't produce boom fast enough. Yet boom stockpiles exist in the US and internationally.

You have pledged the full support of the US military to help fight the spill, and one task military resources can be used in is helping with the mammoth task of transporting boom to the Louisiana coast.

That's why I'm requesting that you deploy military transport aircraft to pick up boom that the Horizon Deepwater Spill Unified Command locates in order to bring it to the Gulf Coast as quickly as possible.

Countless Louisiana jobs and the ecology of the Louisiana marshes depend on the success of our response to this oil leak. Please do not delay in assisting with efforts to locate additional sources of boom.

Sincerely,

Rep. Charlie Melancon

CC:  
Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense  
Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security  
Ken Salazar, Secretary of Interior

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